

The Beginning of Christ's Ministry

"2. The Ministry of Jesus Christ"



"What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him." John 2:11

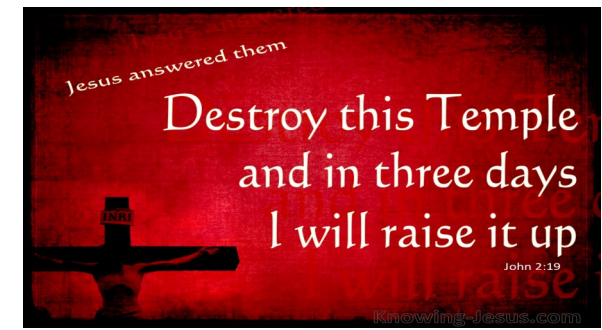
The disciples had been assembled and were following Christ, and evidently Mary knew that her son had some special talents, but it was time for others to see that this was indeed a special ministry and that Christ was truly the Messiah they had been waiting for.

God had a plan for this, as He does for our lives every day, but even some of the disciples were unsure of what was happening. The wedding was evidently someone that the family knew because

Mary was there and Jesus felt at home enough with them to invite his new disciples. According to what we see in research, weddings could sometimes go on for several days. When Mary found out that the bridegroom had run out of wine, she confronted her son. She was aware of his baptism and some of his comments and seemed to feel that he could help the family out. She also told the servants "Do whatever he tells you." Christ told the servants to fill the jugs and take some of the new wine to the master of the banquet. It was the best we are told. This miracle was the first of the signs through which Christ revealed His glory and it also reinforced the belief the disciples had in him.

After the wedding feast we are told that Jesus went to Capernaum with his mother and brothers and his disciples. This must have been a short rest before he went to the temple in Jerusalem for the Jewish Passover and saw people selling cattle and sheep and exchanging money. His reaction was as close to violence as we see. He turned the tables over, drove the animals from the temple and scattered the money. He said to them "Get these out of here! Stop turning my Father's house into a market!" The Jews were upset and asked what authority he had to do this. He answered "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days." John 2:19 The temple he spoke of was his body and his resurrection, but while some were totally confused, others believed.

The miracle at the wedding feast was something visible to people, but there were times when the statements of Jesus were confusing.

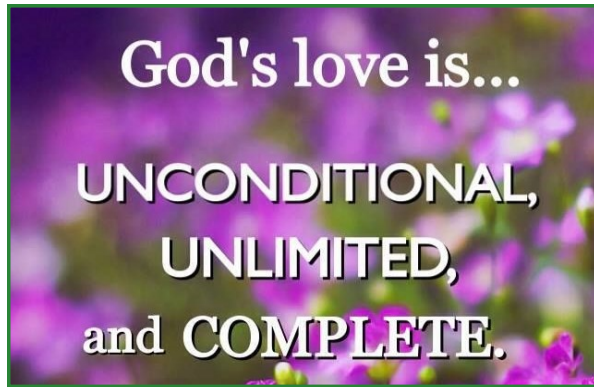


One person who questioned was Nicodemus, a Pharisee and member of the Jewish ruling council.

Because Nicodemus was a part of the authority, he didn't feel free to talk with Jesus during the day light, and yet we are led to believe that he realized Jesus was someone he trusted. Perhaps he had heard about the miracle at the wedding or was at the temple when Jesus turned the tables.

Nicodemus went to Jesus at night and approached him "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him." Jesus answered "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again." Nicodemus replied "How can someone be born when they are old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!" The answer Jesus gave was confusing to Nicodemus as it would be to us. The conversation continues and Jesus tells him he must be born of the spirit, and then tells him the truth that we all learned very young. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only

Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him.” John 3:16-17



John the Baptist was still baptizing people but he was telling them that he was not the one they were to follow. His words were also confusing to the people who are experiencing this new teaching. John told them *“The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on them.”* John 3:36

John the Baptist had a mission. Even in the Old Testament, the book of Malachi tells us that God said *“I will send my messenger ahead of you who will prepare the way for you.”* Malachi 3:1 John’s journey was not easy. Sometimes we don’t think ours is either. As we read this Scripture, we need to stop to realize that we have 2000 years of the journey of others who have taken these words and explained them to us, and we are also the Monday morning quarterback because we know the entire story of the life of Jesus.

The people we are reading about didn’t have the advantage we have today. We look back at the days when Christ was calling his disciples, and when John was telling people about the arrival of Jesus, they were confused. How would we have reacted?

We have a loving advantage. Sometimes our faith is strong like that of Nicodemus and we learn and accept. Sometimes we tend to be like doubters who wondered who this young man was. We know that God’s love is all around us. We can talk with him through prayer.

The people of that time had the Old Testament, but it had been a long time, and they had no idea how this Messiah was going to be coming or when. They were expecting a king, a Messiah, a wonderful counselor, and Prince of peace as prophesied by Isaiah many years before. Instead they saw a young man who was talking in riddles, performing miracles, and upsetting the tables in the temple.

The disciples were on this journey and each time he moved to another area he seemed to gather followers, but he was not always doing what the Old Testament laws preached. His love was a new love, and we will follow with him as we journey through his years on this earth.



Prayer: Father, Please help me to follow faithfully, knowing your love is there for me always. Help me to take the journey of faith to others as your disciples. Please strengthen me as I sometimes doubt. Amen

1. How much do you think that Mary knew about her son? Did she realize he had the power to change the water into wine or did she just think he was able to help the people out?
2. Many people believed after seeing this miracle. How many miracles does it take for us to believe?
3. Nicodemus was a very important person who realized that Jesus was “someone special.” He went to Jesus by night, but he went. Can we go to Jesus by night or day whether we are “someone special” or not? Remember we are all special in God’s eyes.
4. Are we willing to journey with the disciples?

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